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# Marine Corps Combat Development Lead Offers Latest SGL

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*U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

### Marine Corps Combat Development Lead Offers Latest SGL

*By MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Robert S. Walsh, Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, and Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration, discussed his views and perspectives with NPS students, faculty and staff during a Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) in King Auditorium, April 18. During the SGL, Walsh focused on Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, violent extremist organizations and the modernization of our forces.

"I have been on campus for a few days in conjunction with the Naval Research Working Group (NRWG) and I can't tell you how impressed I am each time I get to come to NPS. As I look at this group today, I see a very intellectual and intimidating group," said Walsh. "Everyone here is tackling some of the major challenges we have across the Navy and Marine Corps."

Walsh's role at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, he says, is to look at the future operating environment and decide where the Marine Corps is going – the needs of the force, how the new force will fight, how it will train, and future capabilities to complete the mission.

"One of the things that I'm tasked with is to modernize the force, which is not an easy task considering the fiscal environment. The future operational environment and capabilities is what really brings me here today to connect with you, and learn from what you are doing, while at the same time connecting you with topic sponsors on where we are trying to go in the future," Walsh said.

Walsh discussed three key areas in regards to how best to utilize student, faculty research here at NPS. He discussed how operational and capability gaps can drive graduate level research, in addition to maximizing the alignment of

the research with the most pressing capability gaps. Third, he noted that leadership must also consider the potential for unseen applications and attributes of the research.

"We have to look at all the domains of today in a contested environment," Walsh said. "One of the things that our concept writers are working on with the Army is a multi-domain battle concept of how we are going to operate in the future."

Walsh continued his discussion with using what he called the 4-plus-1 plan – referring to Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and violent extremist organizations – to help understand Marine Corps capability gaps and needs.

"Russia across the board has updated their capabilities and is operating in different places since the Cold War. No longer are they an embarrassed rusted Navy. They have completely changed and we can see that in operations," said Walsh. "Who would have thought they would have been launching surface-to-surface-missiles in the Caspian Sea? We wouldn't have even given that a thought a few years ago."

China could be the U.S.'s greatest threat as we project out 10 years, Walsh continued, due to the modernization of their military. "They are determined to undermine our alliances and develop anti-access capabilities," he said.

Walsh continued the discussion of his 4-plus-1 plan, discussing North Korea's unpredictability due to a mixing of intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities. He also noted Iran's role in creating friction throughout the Middle East. The difficult question becomes, Walsh continued, how much does the U.S. put towards each of these threats?

"We view you as a key part of solving these problems, probably more so than you think," Walsh said. "One of the problems we have struggled with is deferred modernization ... There was been a lot of effort to work quickly and that is an area where your research will help us, and find ways to move faster."

"I'm confident that you will be able to take us to new levels, innovatively, within the academic world, with industry, and within the operating forces," he concluded.

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